

ANNEX B

WARNING

A. PURPOSE

Early and reliable warning of severe weather or other impending emergencies can greatly reduce loss of life and limit property damage. This annex describes the State's warning systems including policies for dissemination of warning information to State and local governments and to the general public.

B. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

1. The National Weather Service is the primary source of forecasts and warnings of weather and flood conditions for the State. It operates a system for the observation, analysis and forecasting of weather conditions and the dissemination of these forecasts and warnings.
2. The National Weather Service operates continuously broadcasting weather radio stations (Weather Service Radio) which broadcast weather and river forecasts. These stations are also capable of broadcasting a signal that will provide an alert to anyone having the proper type of receiver. In addition, the National Weather Service can activate the Emergency Alert System (EAS) by teletype or commercial telephone on a Statewide, regional or county basis in order to warn the general public of impending weather related disasters, as well as other types of emergencies, (i.e., chemical incidents) if requested.
3. PL 93-288, Section 202, as amended, authorizes the use of NAWAS for the purpose of providing needed warning to governmental authorities and the civilian population in areas endangered by imminent disaster.
4. Warnings can be issued by authorized officials of local, State and Federal agencies. Unauthorized sources of warnings are verified by the National Weather Service and/or the Office of Emergency Services.
5. The primary sources utilized for disseminating warning information in West Virginia are the Weather Service teletype, Weather Service radio, NAWAS, EAS, commercial telephone, and radio and television stations.
6. Other State agency communication systems, i.e., State Police (SP) and Division of Highways (DOH) are available as secondary systems for the dissemination of warnings.
7. Upon receipt of severe weather, river warnings, or other disaster information, the following actions will be taken:

- a. The State Warning Point (WV State Police) will activate the NAWAS Warning Terminals and disseminate messages as appropriate.
 - b. The NAWAS Warning Terminals will, in turn, notify County Warning Points in their area of responsibility by the most expedient means available (i.e., radio or telephone).
 - c. The WV State Police will further disseminate the information to law enforcement agencies and County Warning Points that possess the WEAPON system.
 - d. The WV State Police also will disseminate the warning information to all State Police detachments and vehicles.
 - e. The National Weather Service will pass emergency information to radio and TV stations via the EAS. This information will then be broadcast to the general public in accordance with existing Emergency Alert Plans. The NWS will also broadcast the information over the Weather Service Radio.
 - f. State agencies will disseminate the information via their communications systems.
 - g. The Office of Emergency Services will assure that the counties that do not have NAWAS or West Virginia Automated Police Network (WEAPON) which are involved in the warning receive the information. The Office of Emergency Services will also alert pertinent State agencies. The Office of Emergency Services will coordinate notification of radio/television stations of warning information to be broadcast to the general public "for Statewide emergencies".
 - h. County Warning Points will notify their respective county Emergency Services Director and other key officials of severe weather advisories and other disaster related information. The general public of the affected county will be alerted as outlined in the County's Warning Plan.
8. Warning Systems must be capable of being activated at any point within the system. This allows information to be passed to any level for appropriate action and insures receipt of the information should one system fail.

C. TASK ASSIGNMENTS

State Government

1. WV State Police

- a. Maintain, on a 24-hour basis, the Primary State Warning Point (NAWAS).
 - b. Monitor the Weather Service computer and the NAWAS and conduct tests of the NAWAS on a daily basis.
 - c. Notify State Office of Emergency Services during off-duty hours, of severe weather advisories.
 - d. Verify that all NAWAS Warning Terminals received messages that are passed via the NAWAS.
 - e. Disseminate warning information via the West Virginia Automated Police Network (WEAPON) and the WV State Police.
- 2. Office of Emergency Services:
 - a. Establish, test, evaluate and provide overall coordination of State Warning System.
 - b. Maintain the State's Alternate Warning Point (NAWAS).
 - c. Monitor the NAWAS and participate in routine tests of the system.
 - d. Receive and verify warning information from all sources.
 - e. Assist in the dissemination of warning information to County Warning Points.
 - f. Pass severe weather information to other State Agencies as deemed necessary.
 - g. Assist in preparation of County Warning Plans.
 - h. Place State agencies on stand-by.
- 3. State agencies with communications capabilities will make their systems available for warning dissemination as required.

Federal Government

- 1. National Weather Service:
 - a. Observe, analyze and forecast weather conditions.
 - b. Disseminate weather advisories through State warning systems as well as through NWS systems.

2. Federal Emergency Management Agency: Maintain the National Warning System (NAWAS) in an operable condition at all times.

D. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

1. West Virginia Code, Chapter 15, Article 5, Emergency Services
2. West Virginia State Police Emergency Plan
3. PL 93-288, Section 202, as amended “Disaster Warnings”

E. DEFINITIONS

1. Weather Terms

- a. ADVISORY - Information concerning potential disaster causing destructive forces giving details on location, intensity, movement and precautions that should be taken.
- b. WATCH - An announcement indicating that conditions are such that a specific type of severe weather may develop.
- c. WARNING - An announcement indicating that severe weather is occurring or is imminent and that precautionary actions should be taken immediately.
- d. STATEMENT - Information on developing or occurring severe weather.
- e. NOWCAST – Short term forecast for the next 1 to 4 hours that would include severe weather information when appropriate.

2. Warning Systems

- a. NATIONAL WARNING SYSTEM (NAWAS) - A dedicated telephone circuit which connects Warning Points throughout the State to the Primary and Alternate State Warning Points. NAWAS also connects to Federal agencies such as the National Weather Service, U. S. Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Military.
- b. WEATHER SERVICE TELETYPE - A teletype network to state and local governments, news media and other subscribers.
- c. WEATHER SERVICE RADIO - A radio broadcast system that operates 24 hours a day to transmit weather and river forecasts to anyone having the proper receiver.

d. EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS) - A program of the radio and cable television industry which utilizes its facilities to transmit emergency information to the public as prescribed by Federal, State or local officials.

e. WV STATE POLICE RADIO - A statewide radio system to State Police detachments and their vehicles.

f. WEST VIRGINIA AUTOMATED POLICE NETWORK (WEAPON) - A teletype system which connects the State Warning Point to the county warning terminals, 911 Centers, and other law enforcement agencies.

3. Warning Points

a. PRIMARY STATE WARNING POINT (NAWAS) is operated 24 hours a day by the WV State Police at their Headquarters in South Charleston.

b. ALTERNATE STATE WARNING POINT (NAWAS) is operated by the State Office of Emergency Services from their office in Charleston.

c. WARNING TERMINALS (NAWAS) are strategically located throughout the State in facilities which are manned 24 hours a day.

d. COUNTY WARNING POINTS are manned 24 hours a day and can disseminate warnings to key officials and subsequently to the general public.